k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

521 about. Yet gossips they are, and expert in tearing others' reputations.
658 Many a desert tragedy has resulted from too glib a tongue. Ordinary sexual matters are discussed before small children with a frankness
864 and simplicity which modern educationists might approve, but which an English person may find at times embarrassing. The bearing of their young by camels, mares and ewes is not only an everyday topic, but mothers will take their children to watch the progress of such events, alongside their menfolk.

837 On the whole, Badawin women are extremely moral, though they might readily succumb to temptation were it to come their way. Fortunately it does not.

They go in for love affairs, of course, and married women are not above falling desperately in love with other men than their husbands. A woman's only hope in such a case (unless her man happens to be her first cousin) is to tell her husband the whole truth, and beg him to divorce her. This happens fairly often among the rank and file, though not among the senior ladies of the tribe or the shaikh's wives. Sir Richard Burton has said somewhere that among Badawin women who were separated from their menfolk during long absences in the desert when at war, abnormal and unnatural living was not uncommon. This I think a libel, or at least a grave exaggeration.

THE DAILY ROUND OF A BADAWIN FAMILY—"AN AUTUMN STUDY"

132 Time, Early November; Place, Wafra, 30 miles from the sea in the Kuwait Neutral Zone.

[342] The tent is pitched on a slight rise in the ground, so that if rain
512 comes the water will not flood the interior. Everyone is busy from earliest dawn to nightfall, especially the women and girls. A little rain has fallen, the first for eight months, and grass has just started sprouting in the hollows. Both camels and sheep are thin and scarcely able to walk any distance. The summer has been a terribly severe one. More rain is urgently needed, else the grass that has come up will wither again. The head of the family has ridden off on his mare the previous evening to see if better grazing exists 10 miles away. He will not be back till sunset to-day.

000 At 4 a.m. one of the men-servants gives the 'adhan (call to prayer),

L Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI I Kuwait
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837 684 Again, as in the desert, immorality is practically unknown among unmarried girls. Married women on the contrary often indulge in clandestine intrigue. The penalty for immorality is death to the woman if she is found out. The women's brothers and cousins always appear more concerned about their sister's honour than the father is, and if vengeance is to be carried out it is usually the brothers and cousins who track the woman down. As excuse they plead that they could not hold their heads up in tribal *majlis* if they had a sister living in dishonour. Marriage with the man who has led her astray is the only method that will save the girl's life. Even then the seducer must pay *hashm* or honour-money to satisfy the girl's relatives. A strange man sometimes takes the place of the seducer and can get the girl off punishment by marrying her, but this is not common. *Faid* or *'idiyah* is the term given to blood money. Among the Iraq *Ma'adán* (marsh) tribes a girl-relative of a murderer is nearly always given to the brother or son of the murdered person, the idea being that a child from the union of two enemy houses allays any hatred that might remain.

515 Among the Arab tribes of Iraq, as opposed to the *Ma'adán* (marsh-men), a man sets up a special tent or mat shelter called a *haufa* for his wife to be taken to immediately after marriage. This is close to his house or tent as the case may be, and corresponds to a honeymoon tent. After the bride is taken to this *haufa* by her women, the husband, arrayed in his best garments, is conveyed there by his men friends and consummates the marriage. The woman remains a prisoner in the *haufa* for seven days. The man, on the contrary, may come out and receive visitors in his *mudhif* or nearby guest-tent. On the eighth day the woman comes out of her *haufa*, goes into her new home and takes charge of the household duties. The custom of setting up the *haufa* tent applies only if the girl has never been married before. If she be a widow she goes straight to her husband's tent.

LOVE

831 595 I have often been asked if love, as we know it, exists among the Badawin. I have unhesitatingly replied that it does. The fact that a man is permitted to take more than a single wife has nothing to do with the matter. Indeed, it is rare to see a Badawin with more than

h Dickson G-8 (1929-47) 1951 MI I Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

CHAPTER XIII

Morality

There is no immorality, as we know it, among the desert tribes. There is, of course, plenty of marrying and giving in marriage, and as I have said, divorce is so easy that a woman often has six or seven husbands in her lifetime, and a man always as many wives as he can afford, provided he confines himself to four at a time. Prostitutes are unknown among the Badawin, and adultery is punishable with death.

Friendships between men and women, on the other hand, exist, and are recognised, especially if the parties are of the same tribe and are related, for example my friend Shaikh Thuwainan Abu Sifra of the Mu'alla section of the Mutair, was a friend of Mutbi, wife of Falah bin 'A'amir, also of the Mu'alla. Every Badawin, of course, is aware that immorality exists in the big towns, and this is one of the main reasons why he despises the townsman.

Unfortunately a Badawin man up from the distant desert sometimes finds his way to the prostitute quarters when he visits towns such as Mecca and Madina, Jiddah, and Kuwait. This has resulted in the spread of syphilis and venereal disease among the tribes.

In Wahhabi-land proper (i.e. Sa'udi Arabia, excluding the Hijaz), no prostitute is tolerated even in the towns, let alone among the tribes, but I am told that there is nevertheless a good deal of clandestine immorality.

It is curious but true that if you discuss the question of morals with well-informed Najd Badawin, they will always tell you that certain great shaikhly families of the desert, especially in the north, have always had rather loose morals, while certain others stand out for their good morals and generally high tone. For instance, the well-known shaikhly house of Al Sha'alan (Rowala) as well as that of the Hawaimil, Beni Sakhr (both Trans-Jordan), and Shammar Jarba (Iraq), are all said to be pretty lax where women are concerned, and conversely Al Hadhal (Amarat), the Dushan (Mutair) and the Hamaidha (Utaiba)

651 724 643 187 Until about 1930, the Sulubba paid regular tribute to all the Beduin sheikhs for protection. This did not, however, safeguard them from continual petty pilfering, beatings and insults. Beduin travelers or raiders invariably called at Sulubba tents if they could find them, and demanded food and hospitality. The Beduin, who is normally a model of sedateness and reserved decorum among strangers, exhibited the worst aspects of his character in a Sulubba camp. He shouted, bullied, cursed, and swaggered in a manner sometimes shameful. He demanded the best food, cursed his host, complained of everything, ate all he could and then demanded more food to take with him as supplies for his journey. The Sulubba cowered and whined. Long oppression has indeed made them very low class. The ingratiating whine in which they address the Beduin as "Ya Amaimi," "Oh my little uncle," makes one ashamed of human nature!

837 844 Prostitution is reputed to be widespread among the women. Whether or not this statement is too sweeping, there can be little doubt that most of them have a very low standard of morals, and are frequently sought by Beduins for immoral purposes. This traffic can scarcely be unknown to their husbands and brothers, but they seem too debased to protest. While there is a good deal of immorality among the Beduins themselves, such offences are kept strictly secret, and any woman creating a scandal is likely to be murdered. Only the Sulubba seem to be shameless in this respect.

324 The Sulubba are par excellence the children of the desert. Every Sulubbi is nicknamed by the Beduins "Abu al Khala" or "Father of the empty spaces." If the Beduin, compared to the townsmen, is a hardy traveler at home in the great desert, he is but a pampered tenderfoot compared to the Sulubba. Often in summer, when the great Beduin